

Federal Communications Commission

§ 11.11

SOURCE: 59 FR 67092, Dec. 28, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§ 11.1 Purpose.

This part contains rules and regulations providing for an Emergency Alert System (EAS). The EAS provides the President with the capability to provide immediate communications and information to the general public at the National, State and Local Area levels during periods of national emergency. The rules in this part describe the required technical standards and operational procedures of the EAS for AM, FM and TV broadcast stations, cable systems and other participating entities. The EAS may be used to provide the heads of State and local government, or their designated representatives, with a means of emergency communication with the public in their State or Local Area.

§ 11.11 The Emergency Alert System (EAS).

(a) The EAS is composed of broadcast networks; cable networks and program suppliers; AM, FM Low Power FM (LPFM) and TV broadcast stations; Class A television (CA) stations; Low Power TV (LPTV) stations; cable systems; wireless cable systems which may consist of Multipoint Distribution Service (MDS), Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS), or Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) stations; and other entities and industries operating on an organized basis during emergencies at the National, State and local levels. It requires that at a minimum all participants use a common EAS protocol, as defined in § 11.31, to send and receive emergency alerts in accordance with the effective dates in the following tables:

TIMETABLE BROADCAST STATIONS

Requirement	AM and FM	TV	FM Class D	LPTV ¹	Class A TV
Two-tone encoder ^{2 3}	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Two-tone decoder ^{4 5}	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
EAS decoder	Y 1/1/97	Y 1/1/97	Y 1/1/97	Y 1/1/97	Y
EAS encoder	Y 1/1/97	Y 1/1/97	N	N	Y
Audio message	Y 1/1/97	Y 1/1/97	Y 1/1/97	Y 1/1/97	Y
Video message	N/A	Y 1/1/97	N/A	Y 1/1/97	Y

¹ LPTV stations that operate as television broadcast translator stations are exempt from the requirement to have EAS equipment.

² Effective July 1, 1995, the two-tone signal must be 8–25 seconds.

³ Effective January 1, 1998, the two-tone signal may only be used to provide audio alerts to audiences before EAS emergency messages and the required monthly tests.

⁴ Effective July 1, 1995, the two-tone decoder must respond to two-tone signals of 3–4 seconds duration.

⁵ Effective January 1, 1998, the two-tone decoder will no longer be used.

EAS REQUIREMENTS

CABLE SYSTEMS

A. Cable systems serving fewer than 5,000 subscribers from a headend must either provide the national level EAS message on all programmed channels—including the required testing—by October 1, 2002, or comply with the following EAS requirements. All other cable systems must comply with B.

B. EAS Equipment Requirement	System size and effective dates		
	≥10,000 subscribers	≥5,000 but <10,000 subscribers	<5,000 subscribers
Two-tone signal from storage device ¹	Y 12/31/98	Y 10/1/02	Y 10/1/02
Two-tone decoder	N	N	N
EAS decoder	Y 12/31/98	Y 10/1/02	Y 10/1/02
EAS encoder	Y 12/31/98	Y 10/1/02	Y 10/1/02
Audio and Video EAS Message on all channels.	Y 12/31/98	Y 10/1/02	N
Video interrupt and audio alert message on all channels; ² Audio and Video EAS message on at least one channel.	N	N	Y 10/1/02

¹ Two-tone signal is only used to provide an audio alert to audience before EAS emergency messages and required monthly test. The two-tone signal must be 8–25 seconds in duration.

² The Video interrupt must cause all channels that carry programming to flash for the duration of the EAS emergency message. The audio alert must give the channel where the EAS messages are carried and be repeated for the duration of the EAS message.

Note: Programmed channels do not include channels used for the transmission of data such as interactive games.

WIRELESS CABLE SYSTEMS
(MDS/MMDS/ITFS STATIONS)

A. Wireless cable systems serving fewer than 5,000 subscribers from a single transmission site must either provide the national level EAS message on all programmed channels—including the required testing—by October 1, 2002, or comply with the following EAS requirements. All other wireless cable systems must comply with B.

B. EAS Equipment Requirement	System size and effective dates	
	≥5,000 subscribers	<5,000 subscribers
EAS decoder	Y 10/1/02	Y 10/1/02
EAS encoder ¹	Y 10/1/02	Y 10/1/02
Audio and Video EAS Message on all channels	Y 10/1/02	N
Video interrupt and audio alert message on all channels; ² Audio and Video EAS message on at least one channel.	N	Y 10/1/02

¹ Two-tone signal is only used to provide an audio alert to audience before EAS emergency messages and required monthly test. The two-tone signal must be 8–25 seconds in duration.

² The Video interrupt must cause all channels that carry programming to flash for the duration of the EAS emergency message. The audio alert must give the channel where the EAS messages are carried and be repeated for the duration of the EAS message.

Note: Programmed channels do not include channels used for the transmission of data services such as Internet.

(b) Class D non-commercial educational FM stations as defined in §73.506, LPFM stations as defined in §§73.811 and 73.853, and LPTV stations as defined in §74.701(f) are not required to comply with §11.32. LPTV stations that operate as television broadcast translator stations, as defined in §74.701(b) are not required to comply with the requirements of this part. FM broadcast booster stations as defined in §74.1201(f) of this chapter and FM translator stations as defined in §74.1201(a) of this chapter which entirely rebroadcast the programming of other local FM broadcast stations are not required to comply with the requirements of this part.

(c) For purposes of the EAS, Multipoint Distribution Service (MDS) and Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS) stations operated in accordance with subpart K of part 21 of this chapter and Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) stations operated as part of wireless cable systems in accordance with subpart I of part 74 of this chapter are defined as follows:

(1) A “wireless cable system” is a collection of channels in the MDS, MMDS, or ITFS used to provide video programming services to subscribers. The channels may be licensed to or leased by the wireless cable system operator.

(2) A “wireless cable operator” is the entity that has acquired the right to use the channels of a wireless cable system for transmission of programming to subscribers.

(d) Local franchise authorities and cable television system operators may enter into mutual agreements that require the installation of EAS equipment before the required dates listed in the tables in paragraph (a). Additionally, local franchise authorities may use any EAS codes authorized by the FCC in any agreements.

(e) Organizations using other communications systems or technologies such as, Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS), low earth orbit satellite systems, paging, computer networks, etc. may join the EAS on a voluntary basis by contacting the FCC. Organizations that choose to voluntarily participate must comply with the requirements of this part.

[63 FR 29662, June 1, 1998, as amended at 65 FR 7639, Feb. 15, 2000; 65 FR 21657, Apr. 24, 2000; 65 FR 30001, May 10, 2000; 65 FR 34406, May 30, 2000]

§ 11.12 Two-tone Attention Signal encoder and decoder.

Existing two-tone Attention Signal encoder and decoder equipment type accepted for use as Emergency Broadcast System equipment under part 73 of this chapter may be used by broadcast stations until January 1, 1998, provided that such equipment meets the requirements of §11.32(a)(9) and 11.33(b). Effective January 1, 1998, the two-tone Attention Signal decoder will no longer be required and the two-tone Attention Signal will be used to provide an audio alert.

[60 FR 55999, Nov. 6, 1995]